

Statement of Senator Larry Craig
Senate Special Committee on Aging
Healthy Aging in Rural America
March 29, 2001

Good Morning. Thank you for attending our Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing this morning. I would like to thank the witnesses for agreeing to testify before this committee on Healthy Aging in Rural America.

As the new Chairman of this old, well-established Committee, I chose Healthy Aging in Rural America as our hearing topic today because it's a very important issue for Idaho, my state, as well as many other states in the country. It's time we stop thinking of aging as the end of life, but as a continuation of living. Most of us are living longer, healthier and productive lives, and I am looking forward to testimony that will ensure that these opportunities are available to the older Americans in the rural communities.

Some of the challenges facing the elderly in rural communities are transportation, nutrition, access to health care, employment and housing. Questions and testimony today will focus on each of these challenges. My priority is to look at constructive ideas that address the challenges older Americans in rural communities face day after day . . . ideas that will allow our Senior Citizens the options of remaining in their communities and living out a vigorous and productive life.

Again, I would like to thank the witnesses for sharing their expertise and I would like to particularly thank Melinda Adams from the Great State of Idaho who made a detour to Washington, D.C. from her commitment with her daughter who is visiting colleges.